EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Dismissal of Chicago Teachers

Certainty in tenure of office during efficient service is necessary for the peace of mind of the teacher, as for that of all other workers. In Chicago, such security has been ruthlessly dispelled by an action of the school board, which by a close vote arbitrarily dismissed sixty-eight teachers, most of them having been in the system for many years. Previous to this "Loeb rule," Chicago teachers had been assured continued tenure of office without re-election, if they had not been charged with inefficiency during the previous year. Under the new rule, no one is sure of a position except after annual election by the Board of Education.

The faction of the Board led by President Loeb affirmed that this action was taken to rid the schools of incompetents and of insubordinates. Fewer than twenty were ranked inefficient, while forty, ranked good, superior, or excellent, were evidently considered insubordinate.

There can be no doubt as to the animus lying back of the dismissals. Activities of the Chicago Federation of Teachers, a union affiliated with the National Federation of Labor, have been obnoxious to Mr. Loeb and his friends. Thirty-eight of the discharged teachers, not one of them ranked inefficient, had been active members of the Teachers' Federation. Among their number are said to have been the last year's officers of the Federation. It will be recalled that last fall the courts granted an injunction against the Board's proposal to dismiss teachers who belonged to the union. Failing in this first attack, the Loeb faction seems to have taken in the recent rule new means of striking at the teacher's union.

The *School Review* has taken the position that a labor union of government employees is an anomaly. For instance, the sovereignty of the nation would not for a moment permit an organization among its employees which could go on strike, or take other union measures to secure higher wages or similar desires. A city school board theoretically represents the sovereignty of the citizens. To the board is delegated the authority of all the people. To permit the use of labor-union methods on the part of public employees against the properly constituted public authorities is just as unthinkable in city affairs as in national affairs. Quite another matter is a labor union using strike methods against a

private employer. Through ignorance, selfishness, or greed the employer may insist upon working conditions that are quite unendurable. There is no appeal except by force from his measures. In such a conflict neither party represents the sovereignty of the people.

While questioning their right to use union methods, we do not deny teachers the right to form federations in order to influence public opinion in legitimate ways, to advocate progressive school measures, and even, within limits, through publicity to protect individual members against prejudiced school boards. We repeat that the usual labor-union methods of enforcing the union will—these at least are thoroughly objectionable in teachers' unions. Unfortunately, the Chicago Federation has been under the domination of leaders who, with irritating persistency, have assumed the prerogatives and used the methods of labor agitators. It is little wonder that a business man like Mr. Loeb allows his prejudice against labor agitators in the business world to carry over unduly into the educational field when he sees introduced there the methods of walking delegates.

There is one significant fact that deserves further comment. The thirty-eight discharged teachers, ranked from good to excellent, members of the Federation, had been recommended for re-election by Superintendent Shoop. This officer must have been aware of the contemplated action of the Board. The Superintendent's hands may be tied by precedent; at any rate, we have heard not one word of protest. Mr. Loeb himself admits that the business man is not qualified to arrange the curriculum or to select teachers. One thing is certain: the tenure of office of school teachers should be determined, not by lay school boards, but by a competent superintendent.

Chicago is long-suffering. Playing politics in the school and with the schools has for many years been doing incalculable harm. At present the turmoil in school affairs appears to be but a faint reflection of the turmoil in the city's affairs in general. If we ever reach the time when big enough men and women, without political wires to pull, can be placed on school boards, we may have peace, but that end is not in sight. Of course the present rule makes it possible each year for 7,000 positions to be insecure—at the mercy of spoilsmen. For political reasons, any one of 7,000 teachers may now become the prey of personal antagonism. Let any teacher offend the School Board if she dare; or let an objectionable teacher seek a friend on the Board if she wishes to keep her position. A highly significant fact is that, in addition to the sixty-eight teachers who were dismissed, a certain few slated to go, but happening to possess personal friends in the Loeb faction, escaped the general slaughter.

Making "Thinkers" in Their Profession

The School of Applied Industries of the Carnegie Institute of Technology has just completed its first decade; its beginning was contemporaneous with the first widespread demand throughout our public schools for suitable industrial education. In meeting this demand Director Hamerschlag and Dean Connelley deserve abundant credit. They have laid upon themselves and their school the primary duty of organizing a thorough normal course for prospective teachers of industrial subjects. Their graduate, after completing three years of training, is far more than a mere specialist in a single trade. His course has been a combination of the theoretical and the practical. Closely allied, these two branches of instruction are designed by the school to produce, not automatons, but thinkers in industry. Broad-scope training makes it possible for the graduate to start his outside work with an unusual amount of intelligence in his trade; he is fitted to become foreman, superintendent, manager, or, best of all, teacher.

A "thinker" in the teaching profession is a specialist, to be sure, but one who sees the broader aspects and applications of his specialty—an instructor who is able to make his pupils see the meaning of their work in terms of life, a man who can impart to pupils along with technical skill an ability to interpret their work in broad social aspects. Such an instructor is indeed a teacher. Every subject in secondary education suffers from the lack of such teachers; but no subjects suffer so greatly as the industrial branches. A skilled artisan, who may be able to teach boys through imitation the handwork of his trade, may be a wretched teacher in the larger sense of the term. The School of Applied Industries, aiming to give its graduates general culture as well as manual skill, is striking exactly the right note. Every normal school should follow suit—endeavoring to prepare teachers who in their special fields are "thinkers."

What Thought-Problems for the School?

"Many an elderly professional man, looking back on his education and examining his own habits of thought and of expression, perceives that his senses were never trained to act with precision; that his habits of thought permit vagueness, obscurity, and inaccuracy, and that his spoken or written statement lacks that measured, cautious, candid, simple quality which the scientific spirit fosters and inculcates."[1]

President Eliot in this passage is arguing for a larger emphasis upon the teaching of sciences in the high school. He affirms that secondary

[1] "Needed changes in Secondary Education," *Bureau of Education Bulletin*, 1916, No. 10, p. 8.

schools are giving not more than one-sixth of their time and force to observational, sense-training subjects. He supports the introduction of more hand, ear, and eye work.

There can be no question that the courses advocated by President Eliot should receive large emphasis. The lesson in accuracy of observation, humility of unsupported opinion, together with a "cautious, candid, and simple quality" of mind—these lessons are admirably taught by science, with concrete hand and eye work.

However, there can be little doubt that the regions of thought in which most adult minds will be called upon to exercise themselves do not lie in the field of the sciences, nor in the field of eye and hand work. "Vagueness, obscurity, and inaccuracy" in habits of thought, of which President Eliot speaks, are in the fields of religion, politics, sociology, civics, and the like. His argument therefore can be applied with vigor to the end that there be increased practical work, field work, and observational work in history, civics, the study of society, literature, and the rest.

In a nutshell, the judgments men and women are called upon to make in actual life ought to be the models for the practice judgments the schools call upon them to make. Observing and solving a problem in civics is far more in line with real life than observing a problem in botany or geography.

Commercial Training for Boys a Failure

The twelfth report of the Cleveland educational survey, *Boys and Girls in Commercial Work*, discloses the astounding fact that commercial training for boys as given in the Cleveland public schools is, in the opinion of employers, a failure. Over one hundred employers report that girls have been shaped very well for the places they are to fill. On the other hand, employers disregard the preparation of boys, and proceed as if dealing with unformed material. Of boys in employment, those who have received commercial training have received no larger wages, and attained no more rapid promotion, than the boys who enter commercial work with no special training. It is to be noted that employers approve of the commercial work for girls, but deny its efficiency for boys.

Now, it may be pointed out that girls in commercial courses invariably learn stenography and typewriting, largely mechanical processes, requiring for skill little more than persistent effort. Quite different is the commercial education of boys. Boys, if trained at all, must be trained for clerical positions in which mechanical routine is not of prime value. In short, girls entering commercial life from the commercial-

training school have a chance at once to show mechanical deftness; boys are compelled to begin work in positions for which it is impossible to show the immediate results of a rule-of-thumb education. Employers, following the popular example of most business men, would probably be unable to see a connection between commercial education and success, if such a connection exists.

And yet the case for commercial education is not won. Courses in salesmanship, like courses in journalism, or, for that matter, courses in composition, by no means always show fruitful results. Indeed, the same comment may often be made about any course under the sun, from kindergarten to graduate school. If one is attempting to estimate the benefits of education solely by the student's acquisition of greater skill in some one narrow line of endeavor, he is likely to be disappointed. The suggestion of all this for commercial courses is that highly specialized work in these lines has decided limitations in value. General education should constitute the bulk of the work, presented, to be sure, so far as possible through the medium of commercial subjects. Above all, let it be remembered that the vital product of the school is judged, by business men, largely on the basis of the habits of work the school imparts.

Status of General Science

In *School and Society*, July 29, 1916, Miss Aravilla Meek Taylor presents a statistical study of the general-science situation in the High Schools of Iowa, California, and Massachusetts. Contrary to the general belief, the movement is not a new one; at least one Massachusetts school has maintained such a course for fifteen years. However, it cannot be said that any general adoption was begun until 1910. As is to be expected, general science is largely a first-year subject—135 Massachusetts schools, out of 162 reporting, place it in the first year.

Another vital fact is that general science is not mere textbook work. In Iowa, 30 out of 33 schools offer laboratory or demonstration work; in California, 97 out of 99 schools; in Massachusetts, 123 out of 161 schools. Over 60 per cent of the schools offer field work.

The fear that general science is displacing other subjects is dispelled by the fact that in most cases the course had been adopted as a new subject. However, physical geography and elementary physics seem often to have been quite largely supplanted.

After sixteen years since the introduction of general science in Massachusetts, of 184 schools reporting, 156 are classed as distinctly favorable to the subject, while only 5 are doubtful of its value or are

unfavorable. In Iowa 103 reported in favor, 13 not in favor, 27 not in favor or doubtful. Fourteen schools in California have dropped the course; none of them, however, specifically give dissatisfaction as the cause.

Miss Taylor's summaries are interesting:

1. Of a total of 533 schools from which replies were received, 293, or over half, are offering general-science courses in 1914–15 or 1915–16.

2. Of these 293 schools, 275 offer the work in the first year.

3. Of these 293 courses, 229 may be considered as year courses.

4. Of the total number, 250 schools offer laboratory or demonstration work, 162 offer field work, 148 offer both field and laboratory work, and 30 offer neither field nor laboratory work.

5. Out of the total 293 schools, 127 have introduced general science as a new course which does not supplant any other science.

6. In a total of 194 schools in Massachusetts and Iowa (this question was not sent to California) at least 118 of the teachers of general science are teaching from three to six subjects.

7. Of the 533 schools, 414 replies signified approval of the course in general science.

A Dean of Men

A dean of men, who will look after the social life and activities of men students outside the classroom, has been added to the administrative staff of the University of Wisconsin. Professor Scott H. Goodnight, who for two years has been chairman of the faculty committee on student life and interests, has been appointed dean of men.

This new office has been created at the suggestion of the Board of Visitors and others who have felt that other administrative officers, burdened with academic and departmental duties, cannot give close attention to the activities of men students—their clubs, publications, social life, and living conditions. Much of this work has been done by the faculty committee on student life and interests, and the new dean of men, as chairman of the committee, will carry the same work farther. He will endeavor to come into close personal touch with men students and to guide them in securing the greatest benefits from their university work.

Rooming-house conditions will receive his first attention. At the same time he will carry on many ideas that have been started by his committee—business-like accounting systems for student enterprises and publications, comparisons of the scholarship of members of various organizations, co-operative buying for fraternities and boarding-clubs, auditing of accounts, eligibility rules to keep weak students from attempting too many activities.

All social functions, athletics, dramatic and musical performances, and all student publications will be under his jurisdiction. In addition, he will supply the long-felt need of a faculty officer to whom students may go for advice and assistance.

The Newton Home-making School

Two hundred girls of Newton, Massachusetts, attend the Home-making Department of the Newton Vocational School. The aims of this school are: to develop mechanical skill so that the girls will be able to do the actual work of the home efficiently; to give the pupils a sufficient knowledge of the sciences related to the life in the home to work intelligently; to give them an understanding of the principles of hygiene and sanitation, in order that they may guard the health of the family; to teach them the true meaning of thrift and to make them good users and buyers and careful spenders; to give them such special training in cooking and sewing that they can, in case of necessity, support their families; to teach them the civic duties of a good, intelligent woman; to instil in them the love of good reading; to form a high ideal of home life.

Faculty Representation

Faculty representatives have been elected at Cornell University to sit in congregation with the Board of Trustees. The trustees provided for the selection of a committee of three men from the faculty of each college of the university in Ithaca (except the state colleges and the medical school, which already have their councils conferring with the Board) to meet as often as desired with the standing committees of the Board of Trustees, the Committee on General Administration; the Committee on Finance, and the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, to discuss questions affecting the welfare of the colleges. These committees consist of two members (acting with the dean) to be elected by ballot for definite terms, or, as each occasion arises, by the faculty selecting them. It was also provided that the university faculty shall select for a term of three years delegates to represent it on the Board of Trustees, not to exceed three in number. These councilors are to be elected for terms directed by the faculty and meet with the Board of Trustees and the Committee on General Administration with the usual powers except the vote. President Schurman's advocacy of this reform goes back to 1910 and his original plan, with slight modification, is embodied in this new legislation.

Educational Progress in West Virginia

As a part of the general educational progress of the past five years in West Virginia, Superintendent Shawkey speaks of "The High School Renaissance." The total number of high schools in five years has increased from 71 to 152; the number of teachers, from 293 to 637; the attendance, from 4,900 to 11,296; the annual graduates, from 487 to 1,457. This is a record of well over 100 per cent gain in five years.

This progress of high schools is perhaps the most significant feature of a widespread educational awakening, showing the following features: 15 per cent advance in number of teachers; 16 per cent advance in average salary; 38 per cent increase per capita in cost of education; 100 per cent increase in building funds; 54 per cent increase in total expenditure for common schools; 100 per cent for building funds; 107 per cent for state educational institutions. The general progress of the state school system is well represented by the increase of total school expenditures: In 1910, $4,936,701.00; in 1915, $7,799,169.00—an increase in five years of 58 per cent.

New York's Experiments in Industrial Education

In New York City, 35,000 children between fourteen and sixteen years of age annually receive work permits. Most of them leave school before entering the eighth grade. However, after February 1, 1917, every child under fifteen must have completed the eighth grade before he can receive a work permit. About 18,000 children who might go to work under the present law will be prevented after next February. These figures are indicative of the hordes of children who pour into New York industries as soon as the law allows them to do so. It is quite evident that in New York City there is a field for an experiment station in industrial education—the largest in the world.

To meet this need two sets of agencies are at work—private organizations and the Board of Education. The services rendered by John Wanamaker's, by the Department Store Education Association, by the National Association of Corporation Schools, and by similar projects are highly commendable. Hundreds of business houses are furnishing ambitious employees instruction in special branches relating to their own part of the business. Many firms make attendance compulsory. The main object in all of these private schemes is to increase the efficiency of their working staff.

Three experiments carried on by the city authorities, usually considered as industrial education, are called the Schneider plan, the Gary

plan, and the Ettenger system. The essence of the Schneider plan is that pupils shall attend school one week and do practical work in shops the next week. Pupils work in shifts, so that neither the industrial establishments nor the schools are seriously incommoded. Of course the schools teach subjects especially designed to help the student in the line of industrial work chosen by himself or his parents. Eighty-seven firms, 95 schools, and 486 students are in 1916 experimenting with this plan.

The Gary plan, as being tried in New York, is not primarily industrial, at least it is not trade or vocational education, as the Schneider plan is frankly intended to be. Superintendent Wirt repeatedly emphasizes the point that the Gary plan is prevocational. None the less, the eight schools (more in 1917) now experimenting with the Gary plan give an abundance of manual education, along with academic education. But as the children from these schools pass, as from any elementary school, directly to the higher special trade schools, the Gary plan cannot be said to be helping solve directly New York's problem of industrial education. This distinction concerning the purpose of the Gary plan is not recognized by general readers. We repeat, that the vocational feature is a very small and relatively insignificant fact of the Gary plan. The Gary plan is built upon an educational theory far broader than trade education.

The Ettinger experiment gives children in the last two grades of the elementary school a chance to try themselves out in various trades, with the definite object of finding where their ability lies. Seven elementary schools, and seventy-nine shops, including eighteen kinds of trade training, are co-operating in this experiment. In these years the work is called prevocational; it is all done in the school; the manual work is in addition to the regular academic work, and requires additional time.

These two years are followed by vocational schools in which the object is to give definite trade training. Only eighth-grade graduates are admitted. Pupils found unfitted for the trades they are attempting are led into some other more suitable form of work. To boys, woodwork, metal work, electrical wiring, drafting, garment designing, and printing are now open.

In addition the city maintains a very large number of evening trade schools. These are primarily for boys under sixteen, who are required by law to attend night schools. They are open to anyone regularly employed and not attending a day school. With these various lines of trade training New York is frankly experimenting. We shall expect to see in time a systematizing and unifying of the various experiments.